

5735

S E R M O N

OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING TO

ALMIGHTY GOD,

FOR THE

LATE VICTORY

OBTAINED OVER THE

FRENCH FLEET,

On the 28th and 29th of MAY, and 1st of JUNE:

PREACHED ON BOARD

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP

BELLEROPHON,

AT SEA,

On SUNDAY the 8th Day of JUNE, 1794,

BY THE REVEREND

JOHN JAMES FRESSELICQUE, A.B.

LATE OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, CHAPLAIN OF THAT
SHIP, AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. THE
EARL OF NORTHESK.

GOSPORT:

Printed for J. WATTS, at the NAVAL, MILITARY, and ME-
DICAL LIBRARY.—Sold by T. N. Longman, Paternoster-Row,
London; T. Baker, Southampton; B. C. Collins, Salisbury; and
R. Crutwell, Bath.

S E R M O N

ALMIGHTY GOD

LATE VICTORY

FRENCH FLEET

On the 1st and 2nd of JUNE

PREACHED BY

HIS MAJESTY'S

CHAPLAIN



ON SUNDAY the 10th of JUNE 1759

AT THE PARISH

OF ST. JAMES'S PARISH, LONDON

BY JOHN JAMES, ESQ. VICAR OF ST. JAMES'S PARISH, LONDON

COPIED

Printed by J. B. Smith, at the Press of the British Museum, in the Strand, near St. Dunstons Church, in the Year 1759.

TO
REAR-ADMIRAL THOMAS PASLEY,

TO
CAPTAIN WILLIAM HOPE,

AND TO THE

OFFICERS, SHIP'S COMPANY, AND MARINES,

SERVING ON BOARD

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP

Bellerophon,

**DURING THE ACTIONS OF THE 28th AND
29th OF MAY, AND 1st OF JUNE, 1794,**

WHEREIN THE

FRENCH FLEET

WERE DEFEATED,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY

THE AUTHOR.

**H. M. S. Bellerophon,
Spithead, June 13th, 1794.**

TO THE READER.

THE motive for printing the following Discourse, is to raise a Fund for the benefit of the wounded Seamen and Marines, who have lost their limbs on board the Bellerophon, or been rendered otherwise incapable of serving their country, during the several actions with the Fleet of the French present Government, on the 28th and 29th of May, and 1st of June, 1794.—To which purpose the whole of the sums arising from the disposal of it will be applied, the expence of printing and other contingencies being already answered: and this it is hoped will be a sufficient apology for sending it immediately to the press.—A Discourse of this nature, addressed to the variety of descriptions of men which compose the congregation in a ship of war, can have no claim to, (or does the author expect) the smallest merit, either for style or diction. *Criticism* will therefore, it is hoped, on this occasion, give way to the more pleasing impressions
of

of *compassion* and *gratitude* to those who have bravely suffered in their united endeavours to serve their country; in which at the expence of their blood they have, under Providence, happily succeeded:—and the attentions of the humane will be of *greater* benefit *now* than hereafter, as it will enable some of them (who, even in their present unfortunate and mutilated state, would wish to earn a small matter) to obtain the means, and will therefore help to render their future existence comparatively happy—assistance will likewise be administered in a small degree *at present*, which will be of infinite service to the sufferers; as it will necessarily be some time before they will receive either wages or prize money.—It is intended also to make such a partial application to the relief of the widows and orphans of the few *who have lost their lives*; and the number is so small, that it is conceived this plan may be easily and completely effected.

Those who have kindly undertaken to receive this Discourse for sale, will regularly account for
the

the produce to gentlemen whose local and official situation will make it both convenient and proper to inspect the application of it;—and the satisfaction which must naturally arise from seeing this small exertion of our abilities in the cause of humanity and common gratitude, crowned with success, will amply compensate the very little trouble occasioned thereby.

LET US PRAY.

GREAT and glorious Lord God! the High and Holy one who inhabitest Eternity—we pray thee to look down from thy throne of mercy, and graciously to receive our praises and thanksgivings which we humbly tender for thy late bounty and goodness to us thine unworthy servants.—Grant us the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to merit in some degree that favor which thou hast so kindly conferred, by the defence and protection of our lives, in the conflict we have recently experienced with the Enemy, by the reformation and amendment of whatever is amiss in the frame and temper of our minds, or in the course and actions of our lives; and to preserve us to thy heavenly kingdom, when it shall please thee to call us from this life.—We request of thee to receive these our petitions and acknowledgments, in the name and for the sake of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose most comprehensive form of prayer we further supplicate thy protection, saying
—Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy

thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven—give us this day our
 daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we
 forgive them that trespass against us—and lead us
 not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for
 thine is the kingdom, and the power and the
 glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

(121)
A
S E R M O N.

PSALM 115, V. 1.

NOT UNTO US, O LORD! NOT UNTO US,
BUT UNTO *THY NAME* GIVE GLORY
FOR *THY MERCY* AND FOR *THY*
TRUTH'S SAKE.

THE natural impulse of gratitude
in the mind of man, is never more
forcible, or its effects more pleasant,
than when the Heart is warmed by
the pleasing recollection of the re-
cent benefit; this disposition is al-

B

ways

ways attended with the most agreeable sensations, and the spontaneous effusions of the grateful spirit are given and received with equal condescension and favor in proportion as the declaration is made with sincerity.

Amongst the different causes of obligation, which we owe to the Almighty, preservation in time of danger certainly holds a distinguished rank—we thank him first that he hath *made* us, and our next resort to his infinite mercy and goodness is, to *preserve*

preserve us—this is what we daily ask and as constantly receive—he is watchful over all our actions, and if in the common course of our daily pursuits he kindly grants his assistance, when comparatively speaking, we are in little danger of being materially annoyed—how much more gratefully ought we to acknowledge the obligation, when in times of imminent danger and risk, he interposes with his gracious favor, and not only prevents the impending or threatened evil, but further, of his infinite goodness and mercy turneth that to
our

our profit and comfort which was intended for our disgrace and destruction.—To ye who now hear me, I may safely venture to appeal—I believe, in proof of the justice of this remark ; *you* will generally on a moment's reflection exclaim with the Psalmist

“ The Lord hath wrought a mighty
 “ salvation for us—we got not this
 “ by our *own* Sword, neither was it
 “ our own Arm that saved us, but *thy*
 “ right hand and *thine* Arm and the
 “ light of thy countenance, because
 “ thou hast a favor unto us—the Lord
 “ hath appeared for us—the Lord

hath

" hath overthrown our Enemies and
 " dashed in pieces those that rose up
 " against us"—Therefore, " Not unto
 " us, O Lord! Not unto us, but unto
 " thy name be given the Glory."

We are my Friends! now particu-
 larly called upon to offer up our
 praises and thanksgivings to the Al-
 mighty, for having in the Persons of
 yourselves and your brave associates
 in virtue and courage, competi-
 tors for Glory; blessed the British
 Fleet with a Victory, which will stand
 in the first rank, at least, when com-
 pared

pared with every other, delivered down to us by the Historians, since this Kingdom has placed a Navy to protect her shores.

This Victory I say hath been effected under the guidance and protection of Providence by *you*—your Commanders and Officers have been the happy instruments of directing your undaunted and collected spirit, to the possession of this signal and most important contest.

It is my most ardent desire that the happy issue of this glorious undertaking

taking for your Country's safety, and to your own immortal credit and Honour, may have a proper and a lasting effect on all who hear me this day; and though I may in the short discussion of the subject appear to view it in a different light from that in which you may modestly consider it, if you argue that you have done no more than your Duty, yet your grateful Countrymen, my Friends! must and will ever hold themselves obliged in the highest degree to your exertions—and a serious and steady reflection properly made

on the subject must produce comfortable and salutary consequences, both to yourselves and to every other worthy fellow subject, who will give the matter a proper consideration.

In the prosecution of the purpose intended by this discourse, the first observation I shall make, will be to shew the effect of proper discipline and good order, which is the main spring of Action, and gives energy to every effort for the benefit of the service.—In the next place, I shall re-

com-

commend a continuance of those social endeavours to keep up that harmony and friendship, which by uniting have made us *powerful*.—Lastly I shall (calling upon the Almighty to witness the sincerity of all our grateful sentiments on the occasion) carry the intention of our present meeting into effect, by offering our praises and thanksgivings to the Almighty, and beseeching him to preserve in us, hearts and dispositions worthy to receive his inestimable benefits—I shall humbly supplicate that our worthy and brave commander, and all

C

our

our ship's company at present confined by misfortunes in the late actions, which (we all sincerely lament) may be speedily restored to health, and to our society, with the ability of uniting their praises and thank-givings with ours.

First, then, I shall shortly treat on the effects of discipline and good order—The discourses on some of the principal Articles of War, were intended to produce the effect which has so gloriously shewn itself in the united efforts of the *Bellerophon's* whole

whole ship's company, and during a conflict continued at different intervals for *five* days, and wherein throughout *three* separate actions, *no complaint of any kind, even for the most trifling omission* was brought forward against any one of that ship's company, exceeding six hundred, by far the greater part of that number never saw any thing of the kind, 'till the time when we have reason to praise God they behaved so well.— Let me then seriously ask any one of those who hear me—If he thinks it possible this great purpose could have
been

been effected had there been no regulations in force, and the ship's company left to act at their own discretion? Surely not—the service was undoubtedly hard, and the ship's company were necessarily kept some hours without the repose which nature requires—but even this did not affect your spirits; upon the *third* action you bravely performed your part in the conclusion of an event which your country will record to posterity with gratitude—when it was possible, with propriety, you had repose—but without this temporary relief,

relief, I have no doubt, from the general tenor of your conduct during an interval of *five* days suspense—you would have most cheerfully submitted to any personal inconvenience, which human nature could have supported, and where the mind is willing—we see and know perseverance will work almost miraculous effects.—Let your attention never be led astray by any consideration from the strict observance of decency, and a study to promote comfort and happiness, this will ensure the regularity of conduct which hath produced
such

such eminent success on this occasion—And you never need be doubtful, under God's providence, of the same good Fortune, should it happen you are again called forth in defence of your country's cause on this, or any other future occasion.—

Secondly, I recommend a continuance of Friendship and Harmony amongst ourselves, which hath, by uniting made us *powerful*, and will as in this, during any other interval wherein your assistance is or may be called for—And happy am I to declare,

clare, and I believe I can safely appeal to those who will give the subject a turn in their minds, that this is not meant to express the most distant doubt but it will be so—I am happy and most gratefully thankful to declare I believe the late transaction has naturally strengthened the social bond by which we are united—I therefore only mean to guard against a *possibility* of any thing like a difference of opinion happening, by a *general system of accommodation* pervading the whole ship's company—and as our conduct may perhaps

without

without flattery, be said to have been strictly proper and correct on this occasion—So let friendship and courage united, gain the esteem of our fellow subjects of every description, and we need not, *thus prepared*, fear the *threats* of that country which hath chosen for its new fangled title, the pompous appellation of a government on republican principles *one and indivisible*. They would wish the world to believe *they* have but *one principle, one sentiment*—Alas! it is to be feared their principle and sentiment (I mean the principle and sentiment of their
leaders)

leaders) is the immediate opposite of what they wish to make appear.—

I can appeal to you who have heard the report from some of their most intelligent members who have fallen into our hands—for the fallacy of their affected *indivisibility*, or union of opinion—you have heard them declare *their* notions and their opinions of their present government—you have heard them state “that many of “them were *driven* into the service.” I have conversed with some of them concerning their ideas of the liberty they enjoyed in France—they say—

boresome

D

“the

“ *the liberty we expect, will be allowed*
 “ *us when the war is over.*”—alas ! ex-
 perience is the touchstone of truth—
 and after all, some of them have been
 candid enough to confess, that though
 the old form of government had some
 defects, and though the subject la-
 boured under some, it is to be fairly
 allowed, *greivous oppressions* ; yet they
 were happier under the old form, by
 having only one despotic monarch,
 than they can be now under the ar-
 bitrary rod of the present executive
 power—under the power of a con-
 vention, which, so long as they are
 suffered

suffered to remain will daily add to their already unexampled wickedness and cruelty, by fresh acts of tyranny and oppression, even to the destruction of the religion in which they have been born and educated, and will in time, if they are suffered to proceed—most certainly become *self elective*—Thus my friends! we have by this view comparative of the situation of that unfortunate country with that of our own, reason to praise God, and to pray of him to continue that social and united disposition of friendship to each other,

which

which hath enabled us to withstand the severest attacks, and will if we cultivate it, secure us from any danger of suffering from this "*Republic, one and indivisible.*"

I come now, my brethren, to the third and conclusive part of what I have to urge—namely—the necessity for offering up our grateful sentiments to God Almighty for his recent great mercy to us—and to beseech him (in his own good time) to restore to us our brave Admiral, labouring at present under the misfor-

tnne

tune we have all so great reason to
 lament *sincerely*, as I am certain we
 all do—and to be pleased likewise to
 grant that all our companions, in the
 like situations, may, as speedily as
 the nature of their respective cases
 will permit, be blessed by a restora-
 tion to health, and to the ability of
 uniting their praises and thankgiv-
 ings with ours—for—“ The Lord
 “ hath done great things for us—The
 “ Lord hath done great things for us
 “ —for which we rejoice—Our help
 “ standeth in the name of the Lord,
 “ who hath made heaven and earth.”

Inde-

Independent of the joy and gratitude in which we ought to participate with our brave fellow subjects in the Fleet, and on Shore, for so great an instance of the goodness of the Almighty, by the means of this important Victory, obtained under some disadvantageous circumstances, as force and number beyond *doubt superior—situation and the like**, all which circumstances tend to increase our sense of duty and obligation to

* The author is informed the disadvantages we contended with, are as follows, the enemy had 4 ships, 360 guns, and 8370 men superior to the British Fleet, on this occasion.

our

our great Creator, and the Ruler of the Universe to us wretched, and but for his interposition and assistance, impotent mortals—setting aside therefore the duty we owe to God for the victory and preservation of the fleet collectively—let us with humility, but with most grateful hearts, turn our eyes to our own situation, as a *single ship*, let us contemplate with reverence the variety of the *situations of danger to which we were singly exposed* in the course of the time we were engaging the enemy, having done this, let us commune with our
own

own hearts (it is not *here* alone, my Friends, that I would enforce this sentiment) I would have it even before you when you are retired to your repose, or at any time when the mind has leisure for reflection.—

“ Lord, what is man, that thou art
 “ mindful of him, or the son of
 “ man, that thou visitest him, for
 “ thou hast made him a little lower
 “ than the angels, and hast covered
 “ him with Glory and Honor”—what
 indeed do we not collectively, as
 well as separately owe for the pre-
 servation of our *own ship*, at one time

exposed

exposed to the dreadful fire of three ships larger than ours, and left a wreck upon the face of the ocean—and yet to lose so few lives, comparatively speaking*—almost approaches to a miracle—Our good fortune, much as ye exerted yourselves and bravely as ye contested the point, was not so much dependant upon your own endeavours, as on the Grace of the Almighty, which by co-operating, rendered the object practicable—That we were bereft of our commander, and at a time too,

* Only four during the whole of the three actions.

E

when

when his experience would have made his presence undoubtedly of the greatest importance to us—was another most unfortunate circumstance—and here let me pause awhile—I reflect with humble gratitude to the Almighty, on the patience and resignation which blessed the wounded Hero at the painful interval, when he might have wanted both mental and corporal strength—but when the body even dies, the soul will revive—at that painful interval, when he most required assistance—that steady uniformity of conduct which ever attends

attends the brave and good, was *his* comforting resource in the hour of trial most severe—He fought like a Hero—he bore his misfortune like a Christian—many of ye were witnesses to this fact, and it is a lesson to us all that the most unexpected misfortunes *may* be borne with an even mind, having our trust in the Almighty.

I have before declared to ye—that neither my sacred order, or the solemn service which I here stand to perform, are to be prophaned by servile flattery—I despise the man
who

who would use it on any occasion—
 but to speak the dictates of truth, to
 which ye can all bear witness is justi-
 fiable—even to a degree, that it
 would be inexcusable in me upon
 this occasion, not to enforce such
 conduct in cases of sudden misfor-
 tune, as an example to those who
 hear me—But that it hath pleased
 the Almighty to spare his valued life,
 and to vouchsafe to his captain and
 officers that portion of his atten-
 tion which preserved them unhurt,
 to continue the conflict with that
 coolness and bravery which so ho-
 norably

norably distinguished *his* conduct as well as *theirs*, and saved the ship's company and the ship itself from the violence of the enemy, and the danger of the element in that situation*—that we have since the action, been in the habit of receiving daily the most grateful marks of approbation from the noble and most respected commander in chief, and all the other chief officers of the fleet, and when we are led (from a confidence that we have, to the best of our abili-

* The Bellerophon was a mere wreck, having only the lower masts standing, and all the shrouds and rigging cut to pieces.

ties,

ties, exerted ourselves in our separate stations) to believe, that flattering as these attentions are, they are not totally unmeritted—reflecting thus, we shall most heartily and gratefully offer up our thanks to the Almighty for his kindness, in giving us the *ability* to conduct ourselves worthily in so trying an interval—we shall likewise unite in supplicating a safe and speedy restoration to those who need a return of health, not only in our own ship, but to officers and persons of all descriptions throughout the fleet—and we

shall

shall shed a tear for those fellow labourers who have been taken from us during the actions, praying, that as they have lost their lives in the prosecution of their country's cause—they may be received into those happy regions, of which the upright are promised the inheritance after the journey through this life is performed—"The Lord gave, the Lord
 " hath taken away, blessed be the
 " name of the Lord!"—Through the united efforts of yourselves, and the rest of our fellow subjects now serving in this fleet, it hath pleased the
 Almighty

Almighty to save and protect our
 country, may that country ever
 prove grateful—may those who have
 suffered, find an Asylum in the cha-
 ritable institution provided for that
 purpose, having bravely exposed
 their lives and lost their limbs in the
 defence of their country—and may
 the return made to the laudable ef-
 forts you have used in your coun-
 try's defence, “ kindle in the breasts
 “ of officers and seamen, an ardour
 “ for their country's service to vin-
 “ dicate her cause” to the latest æra
 of Time.—“ Through God shall we
 “ do

“do valiantly, for it is he that will
 “tread down our enemies.”—Lastly,
 may it please the Almighty to pre-
 serve unto us, uncorrupt and entire,
 our present happy constituted form
 of Government, let no Foreign inno-
 vators dictate to us, and endeavour
 to persuade us we are unhappy, and
 we shall continue blessed under the
 best of Sovereigns (who, may God
 Almighty long preserve!) and the
 most rational form of Government
 in the universe—May we when call-
 ed upon, be ever cheerfully ready to
 join hand and heart in the defence of

both—and may the Lord of his infinite mercy second our endeavours to the speedy restoration of peace.—

“Blessed be the name of the Lord
“from this time forth, for ever
“more.”—Amen.—

F I N I S.

6 JU 65

64